

Review

FABIO GATTI. *OVIDIO, TRISTIA 4: INTRODUZIONE, TESTO E COMMENTO* (Millennium 13).
Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2022. Pp. 582. ISBN 9788836133031. €50.00.

This excellent new commentary on *Tristia* 4 is a welcome addition to the growing scholarship on Ovid's exile poetry. Recent commentaries on the *Tristia* include Ciccarelli (2003) and Ingleheart (2010) on *Tr.* 2, Luisi (2006) on *Tr.* 4.10, while the Green and Yellows by Stephen Hinds on *Tr.* 1 and Lauren Curtis on *Tr.* 3 are eagerly awaited. The expansive format of this commentary allows for copious exposition, discussion and citation of bibliographical references, making it an especially valuable resource for further research.

The general introduction (3–42) does an excellent job of presenting the major themes and scholarly issues of the *Tristia* as a whole and of situating Book 4 within the collection, tracing connections to other poems in Book 4, the rest of the exile poetry and Ovid's earlier works. After the intense descriptions of the exilic landscape of Tomis in Book 3, Ovid is now in his second year of relegation and his focus is more inward-looking. G. detects, particularly in the second half of the book, 'un tono di totale scoramento' (7). G. helpfully lays out the structural features of *Tr.* 4 (10 poems, the shortest book in the collection), addressing issues of poetic arrangement (ring-composition between 4.1 and 4.10, 4.6 as a 'proemio in mezzo', paired poems (4.4, 4.5), juxtaposition and contrast) and addressees. It is particularly illuminating to consider Ovid's famous autobiographical poem 4.10, which is usually read as self-standing, within the context of *Tr.* 4. G. elucidates the poem's closural function and the effect of its climactic assertion of poetic autonomy (particularly as read after the threatening 4.9). Among the major themes of Book 4 and the *Tristia* that G. discusses are: Ovid's identification with the sufferings of literary heroes (4.1, 3, 6, 8), his insistence on the 'reality' of his unbelievably bad exilic situation (4.1.66 *vera quidem, veri sed graviora fide*), the unsolvable problem of the '*carmen et error*' (see on 4.1, 4, 8, 10), and the prominence of Ovid's reflection on the nature and function of exilic poetry (as consolation (e.g. 4.1, 4.10), praise (4.2), fame (4.10), apology, revenge (4.9)). G. argues that the book seeks to address Ovid's public (4.1.2, 4.10.132 '*lector*'; 4.9.19 *per immensas ... gentes*), thus denying the emperor the power of determining Ovid's literary fame.

At the same time Ovid offers examples of how his poetry could be turned to imperial panegyric (4.2) or, threateningly, to invective (4.9). Ovid's treatment of Augustus in the poems of Book 4 and the exilic collection as a whole is treated in the introduction and is a major preoccupation of the commentary. G. is inclined to detect implicit polemic in Ovid's self-identification as Augustus' victim (4.1.54, 4.3.69), in his protreptic praise of Augustus' clemency (e.g. the 'blackmail encomium' of 4.8.38, *mitius immensus quo nihil orbis habet*, cf. 4.4.53), which contrasts with the repeated emphasis on the *principis ira* (e.g. 4.10.98). G. notes the unusual lack of requests for pardon or mercy in Book 4 (only 4.4.51–4). The final section of the introduction is devoted to a lengthy survey of the manuscript tradition and of earlier editions and commentaries beginning from the fifteenth century (29–42). Throughout the introduction and commentary there are extensive references to the discussions of secondary sources, cited in the impressively comprehensive and up-to-date bibliography, which makes the work extremely useful.

The text G. provides is his own and he carefully explains in the commentary his textual choices in relation to the other major editions (I counted forty divergences from Owen's (1915) OCT and eighty-four from Hall's (1995) Teubner); no new conjectures are offered. Although G. provides an abbreviated list of codices taken from Hall, he does not accept any of Hall's own conjectures, nor his division of 4.4 into two elegies. The book concludes with an extensive bibliography and two helpful appendices (1. Important words and subjects (including Latin words), 2. metre, rhetoric, style).

The text of each individual poem is followed by a summary, introduction and line-by-line commentary. Due attention is given to discussion of textual variants/cruces, language, word-order, rhetorical features and prosody (less space is given to syntax or grammatical explanation). G. offers copious discussion of Ovid's intertexts, as well as generous citation of literary parallels, especially from Ovid's own poetry. G. is excellent on poetic register and metapoetic implications. The heart of the commentary is interpretive, with constant reference to the relevant scholarly discussions and bibliography. G. is particularly attentive to the well-known ways in which the

exile poems exhibit continuity with Ovid's earlier erotic poetry (linguistic and thematic), while reconfiguring previously positive figures and themes in negative ways, signalling the reversal of the poet's situation ('elemento "palinodico"' (93)), e.g. at 4.1.55 the topos of uncountable grains of sand signifies the multitude of Ovid's ills, while in *Ars Amatoria* 1.253–4 the figure had represented the uncountable occasions for meeting women. The commentary does an excellent job of contextualising each poem within the book, connecting its content with the exile poetry as a whole and guiding the reader through the major scholarly issues, while providing the relevant secondary sources.

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